

# Robert Scheer at FFF Conference 2007, Part 6 of 6

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Robert Scheer on "Ike Was Right and We Are Becoming What We Despise" at the Future of Freedom Foundation's <http://fff.org> Restoring the Republic, 2007.

Robert Scheer covered presidential politics for The Los Angeles Times for thirty years. He is the author of six books, including: *With Enough Shovels: Reagan, Bush, and Nuclear War*; *America after Nixon: The Age of the Multinationals*; and coauthor of *The Five Biggest Lies Bush Told Us about Iraq*.

Playlist of Scheer's lecture: [http://www.youtube.com/view\\_play\\_list?p=24B11D216AD6C419](http://www.youtube.com/view_play_list?p=24B11D216AD6C419)

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I think I was supposed to clinch in fact I know I was weight of it I have a movie called citizens stand come I came back to me you've seen that movie right then Sadie stand where I have in our an argument with what happened on this very issue in the documentary and more happen is defending it and I'm opposing it and I'm saying it's just like Vietnam so i don't have to google that i'll just send you give me your name and i'll send you a copy but i'm not going to say I'm let me just end on this I don't claim you know it was very nice introduction you know I think I've gotten it right more often than I've gotten it wrong but let me tell you one of the Dumber things that I wrote I wrote an article saying I thought George W Bush would be a pretty good president I did I thought he hadn't been a half bad governor in Texas I thought he would learn some lessons for his father than hill I didn't think he'd be our Savior or anything but I thought he had his head screwed on right you know I had no idea to turn the government over to these neoconservative nutcases you know I don't mean to be disparaging of them in the sense that maybe they make good college lecturers or they'd be good to have a debates but the idea I mean I have doubts if they turn the government over to me and I'm relatively sane turning it over to Richard Perle and Wolfowitz in these peoples madness absolute madness and somehow this was done it was done over the objection of all the people that just fly ahead trusted and so forth so my feeling is you know I'm not going to be one is that I've never taken a stupid position I've never been wrong with something what I'd like to fake is I work at it and try to get it right I'd like to think i wake up at three o'clock in the morning and ask myself did I blow it you know I'd like to think that I will correct myself I'd like to think that I can be held accountable you know I mean I've had conversations with Daniel Ellsberg where he tells me I get things wrong told me not twice this afternoon you know and you know so or i membered a name wrong or something I don't sign it off and I'm not running

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don't sign it off and I'm not running the US government I don't shine it off because first one thinks the right thing to do I don't think the human thing to do I think people bring up information contrary to your analysis you ought to think about it that's why I've began this talk by saying you know maybe higher can find me she's were right you know well what's scary about our situation now is not just our government but our whole sort of professional class the thing that was being discussed before these people who when she was working in the Pentagon knew better but these people don't speak up its I can't keep getting back to that bottom line what is going on you know what is going on I mean I need them all the time and they tell me yeah it sucks it's bad you know but why don't you say something here I got my tape recorder let's talk oh no it's not the right moment you know so what you have to ask yourself and I guess you got a grand theory about government

corrupting and so forth but I find that the private sector I find it all over the place you know that people don't have that sense that truth matters that truth before everything let me go let me just end on this I really is to me a key point what I've learned in my life you know one reason i'm against statism i've seen plenty of states that you know hurt people in the name of saving and so forth all over the world you know I met by interview Castro when he told me why you had a roundup homosexual is in Cuba you know for their own good or something you know and you know so we've seen these horrors that are done in the name of states and so forth you know and and what I've learned from this whole long life is you know that we do need these limits we do need accountability okay and that old thing that freedom makes you strong you know the old marketplace of ideas okay that leads to take seriously that good ideas choose drives out error all right what have we had instead the creation of the atmosphere in which there is no truth seeking okay so error dominates and if I think of my work as a journalist I

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think of my work as a journalist I always think well wait a bit why did it remain for me to make this point and as i mentioned five I had to do it every president from Nixon on you know till this current one up up to his current one bed to do these guys I've been around I've heard to be plenty of senators plenty about sports and so forth and I sit there and I think wait a minute why didn't you read Khrushchev's diarrhea know that Stalin did not like Maui tongue and preferred Chiang kai-shek and that the sino-soviet dispute really started in the late 20s and what the hell was this foreign policy all about why don't you have that sense of complexity I gave a speech here washing went long ago for my playing president Brooke and I said you know Colin Powell said if he had just read bernad fall than a French soldier and there was a reporter and I'd stepping on a landmine the company american troops should if i had just read bernard for census in his autobiography i would have known the vietnam war doesn't make any sense so I repeated that and a woman in the audience turned out to be burnout falls widow Dorothy fall and she said well why didn't he read Bernard the books were in the bookstore they're available you know so what I when I think of what I've been able to do and others that are bi Hirsch any of the journalists that I respect you know it's not that we read tea leaves and it's not that with particularly bright it's just that we bothered to look you know we didn't let him put the blinders over and the others deliberately avoid looking they know what the distinction is they don't take positions they position themselves think about that that is the standard whether you're a TV pundit whether you're a big editor whether you're a politician or so forth you don't say I must take a position because lives are at stake you know you know my wife is writing a book with Mary Tillman the mother of Pat Tillman the Tillman pat in Kevin children Kevin we published on our site two of the most marvelous he went to read their history all the whole family third side and so forth these are people had big careers kevin was a baseball player you know Cleveland alarm beep I had a six million dollar contract

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had a six million dollar contract response to 911 they say we got to sign up it shouldn't just be the children of poor kids we got to go do this thing you know set an example and then they're sent to Iraq which they don't believe in because they were smart they'd done some research and they carry books with him but they went along and they served their tour of duty and then Pat was given a deal well I want you go home now you've done it we got our poster and he said no I signed up to get bin Laden you know and he asked to stay in and he asked and he goes to Afghanistan and then what do they do it gets killed and what a most benign explanation okay friendly fire you know actually what have you what happens they start lying about it within an hour everybody on the ground knows his brother comes back and they lied to him they're instructed to lie to his brother who is in the same unit but in a different area he comes back to the camp where his Pat you know and they lie first they say they don't know and then it was friendly fire and they knew they truth the guy accompanied a body back with him who the truth it was under orders that you will be court-martialed if you tell the truth instead of lying it just goes on every level and it besmirches you know the people if it stains people who make sacrifice like Pat Tillman and Kevin's hillman it's absolutely outrageous and people who know the truth on the whole chain of command because plenty of them knew it right up to the White House they knew this was lies but they wanted to keep the poster-boy image they want to be able to say at halftime

shows in professional football games all this great hero and so forth died you know like Jessica Lynch yes a heroic woman she's heroic or she wouldn't mind she wrote an honest book and they tried to use her so we if you want to know my support cut on this society right now with this advanced age is yes we are in terrible shape I don't know if we're in terrible shape because the articles Confederation I don't need to keep picking on that and I don't know if the libertarian thing is to solution where I will agree with what I've heard at this conference you know and it was you said to me at the end of this conference you will be a libertarian okay but what I

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will be a libertarian okay but what I will tell you is we are in terrible shape we have no control of our government do you not have adults washing the store we are lie to it every turn and we are have a governmental process that corrupts people corrupts them in the extreme so that you cannot count on them to do the right thing that they should be doing and we pay them to do that they're supposed to be there to do no matter their education no matter what church they go to no matter what ideology they follow the end up being Liars whether they're in a democratic or republican administration and that's a very sad commentary on the state of our culture at this point in our history thank

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